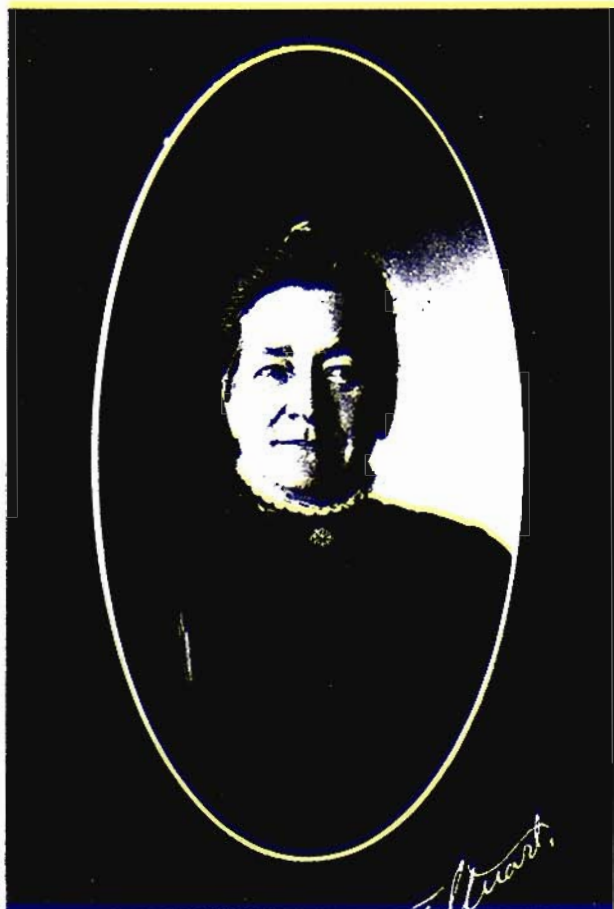


Wedding Plans: 1843

Groom Needed Best Man

It was almost 150 years ago that Francis S. Dunham (1812-1856) (8) (Deacon John 1, John 2, John 3, Ebenezer 4, Ebenezer 5, Jonathan 6, Ralph 7) penned the letter that follows, to his intended, Leah Ann Handy. Francis Dunham was a transplanted New Englander who was then living in the general area of Washington, D.C., which was Leah Ann's home. He was a schoolmaster who struggled with ill health & had been advised to leave Connecticut (Mansfield) for a milder clime.

"Berlin, Md., June 10, 1843. My dear Ann: "Time hath a hasty step." But little more than a year since we were first acquainted. In the memory of the heart, it is but yesterday. Days & years mark the advance of time; they leave indellible traces of their progress on all things mortal; but they do not measure the progress of moral & intellectual existence. Feelings & impressions, hopes & fears, joys & sorrows, are the true indices of the progression of a moral being. Of all those which the memory can reach, how few are there which have an on-ward tendency! Into how small a space might they be compressed? Twenty, thirty years -- a mere point in existence! "Time hath a hasty step." But a few short months & under favor of Providence, we will commence an experiment that, whatever of weal or woe it may bring, is certainly an era in social life. "Time hath a hasty step," which reminds me that I am writing a letter to you, Dearest, & that there are many things to be noticed in a single sheet. Imprimis, I am gratified & grateful for your kind acquiescence in the suggestions which I made in my last. We certainly agree vastly well thus far. Is there any good omen to be drawn from the fact? Now, my dear, all about the approaching ceremony (not a MERE ceremony, I hope). It must be thoroughly discussed, I suppose. And here I am out of my lattitude & longitude, have lost my reckoning entirely -- or rather, never HAD it. There is an inherent defect in my constitution -- a want of perception of the minor circumstances incident to social life, trifles & valueless in themselves, but important & necessary in the relation in which they stand, what every man of common sense who means to live in the world should be acquainted with, & what men who pretend to UN-common sense generally effect to despise. Now it is this very defect which has alwys given me a rather false position in society, & it is one source of gratification to me (selfish though it be) that your practical good sense, your knowledge of things as they are, will help to set me right in this particular. Indeed, if I mistake not, the self-same ideas were fore-shadowed in one of your last letters. But I wander....The wedding ceremony. In what costume will you have me appear? How many aides-de-camp, alias groom's men, shall I provide? By the way, I have no very sure dependence that way. My friend, Mr. Graves, is proposing the act as principal in his own behalf about the same time, & I have not another here whom I would willingly take with me on such an occasion. Mr. Williams is the only one whom I know in the vicinity of the capitol, & even of him I am not certain. (To p. 2)



FROM ALLEN DUTTON, Phoenix, AZ, we have the portrait (at left) of his grandmother, Mary Elida Dunham Dutton (1848-1918) (9) (Deacon John 1, John 2, John 3, Elisha 4, Ebenezer 5, Bangs 6, Abel 7, Justus A. 8). Our eyes are drawn to the pin that she wears at her throat, which looks as if it might be identical with one belonging to another Dunham girl, Miriam L. Dunham (1874-1940), grandmother of Editor Phyllis Kitson (& the granddaughter of F. S. Dunham, author of the Page One letter.) That pin was a favorite of Miriam's, too. It has gold petals & a small pink stone at its center.

WEDDING PLANS (from p. 1) I shall write to him soon & ascertain his whereabouts. In the meantime, I want your suggestions. The ceremony, merely as such, is a matter of perfect indifference to me, exclusive of your pleasure. Common etiquette, I presume, dictates that I should make some further suggestion, hint or remark, but for

the life of me I cannot think what it is just now. I did not deem proper to address another letter to your father on the subject, from the fact that I had his full & unconditional permission to carry the affair to its natural & proper termination, nor did I neglect your mother, inasmuch as an address to him naturally & properly & actually included her, & his consent carried hers, not by implication merely, but actually in point of fact (that is, what I gained by observation). Am I correct in these particulars? So you see, my dear, I have nearly filled my sheet without saying much; much that I ought to say is perhaps unsaid. But I trust your goodness for all the deficiencies & inadvertencies, & only beg you to notice & give me a hint, as far as you may consistently with your good pleasure. My best regards to your father & mother. Say for me what I ought to say. You will do it much better than I can. Remember me to your brothers & to my Cousin Margaret. Affectionately & yours truly, FRANCIS S. DUNHAM." --- How letters have changed in the interval since this was written! Think of our hasty notes (when we are absolutely COMPELLED to write them) today. In the 1840's letters were still thought of as "epistles," which difference required that there be a general theme to the product, complete with literary allusions. They were intended to be worth saving, & in many cases, fortunately, they were saved. One thing, however, has not changed in all those years: Usually bridegrooms have much less interest in their upcoming nuptials than do the brides. That appears to have been true in 1843, & it still is today. (Thanks go to Sue Andersen, Los Angeles, CA, for sharing this & many other old letters. Sue is a great granddaughter of the writer.) - - - - -



4 GENERATIONS. From Dorothy Dunham Curtis (11) (Deacon John 1, John 2, John 3, Ebenezer 4, Ebenezer 5, Jonathan 6, Ralph 7, Francis S. 8, Rev Francis 9, John H. 10), we have this 4-generation picture. Dorothy herself is on the left, followed by her granddaughter, Debbie Curtis Reynolds, & her great grandson, Dwight D. Reynolds, held by her son, Paul D. Curtis. The photo was taken in 1988 upon the occasion of the baby's christening.

MERCER COUNTY, PA. DUNHAMS The following accounts of Dunham family members are from the HISTORY OF MERCER CO., PA (1888), & come to DD from Marilyn Roth. The subjects of the article are descendants of Jonathan Dunham (1775-1856) (7) (Deacon John 1, Benjamin 2, Edmund 3, Jonathan 4, David 5, Jonathan 6). Azariah, the 1st discussed, was his son & Samuel was a grandson. "DUNHAM FAMILY. One of the pioneer settlers of Mercer Co. was AZARIAH DUNHAM, a native of NJ. He was a blacksmith by trade, & his 1st settlement in this county was made at Hickory Twp. He subsequently removed to Trumbull Co., OH, but returned to Mercer Co & died about 1855. His family consisted of 7 sons & 1 daughter - Robert, the 1st son, being the progenitor of the Dunhams now residing in Hickory Twp. He was also a blacksmith & carried on the business in connection with farming. He married Annie, daughter of Archibald Titus of Hickory Twp, & by this marriage was the father of 6 children: Azariah R., of Hickory; Adeline, wife of Sebastian Runser of Sharon, PA; Shedrack, of Michigan; Albine of Hickory Twp; Melvin of Sharon, PA; & Newton, who died in 1884. Robert died in 1884, his wife having passed away in 1867. Azariah, the eldest son, was born in 1827 in Hickory Twp, was here reared & educated at the common schools. Early in life he engaged in coal drilling & subsequently went into farming. He married in 1849 Elizabeth, daughter of Geo. & Mary (Boyer) (to p. 4)

MERCER CO., PA. DUNHAMS (from p. 3) Troutman, & by this marriage they have 3 children: Lawrence, Ella (wife of John Metzler of Hadley, PA) & A. Douglas. In politics, Mr. Dunham is a Democrat. SAMUEL DUNHAM, merchant, is a son of George & Jane (Hodge) Dunham. The grandfather of our subject, Jonathan Dunham who married Mary Clark, was a native of NJ who came to Mercer Co. at an early date & took up a large tract of land which was located where the borough of Sharpstown now stands. He died in 1856. He had 11 children: Justus; Margaret, who married Henry Dunlap; George; Nancy (now) Mrs. William Moyer; Experience (now) Mrs. Thomas Ferguson; Clark; Azariah; Phineas; Rachel (now) Mrs. Robt Jackson; James, who died in 1846; Mary (Mrs. Daniel Groscoft); & George, the father of our subject, whose family consisted of 7 children: Jonathan (deceased) who served 3 years in the 10th Regiment, PA Volunteer Cavalry; Robert, who died from the effects of a wound received in the war, & was a member of the 63rd PA Volunteers; Samuel; Mary (decd) George (decd); Jane; & Phineas. George died in 1871, & his wife in 1878. Samuel, our subject, was born in 1838 & reared & educated in Pymatuning Twp. His 1st employment was as a clerk for his uncle, Samuel Hodge, a merchant of Sharpstown. Subsequently he was employed by his father in stone quarrying & stone cutting. On Aug. 20, 1861 he enlisted in Co. K, 63rd PA Volunteers, & served 3 years, participating in all the engagements from Yorktown to Weldon Railroad, which included Fair Oaks, 7 Days' Fight, 2nd Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Mine Run, Wilderness, Spottsylvania, North Anna & Cold Harbor & Petersburg. In 1865 he engaged in the grocery business in Sharpstown, which he now conducts. Our subject was married in 1859 to Hannah, daughter of Wm. Carnes, of Pymatuning Twp, & by this marriage they have 7 children: Victor H.; William G.; Gertrude; Mertie; Minnie; Cora; & Bessie. Mr. Dunham was appointed postmaster of Sharpstown in 1869, which office he held until 1885. He is also connected with the G.A.R., Post # 234, of Sharpstown; a member of the I.O.O.F., # 739; & the K. of P. Lodge # 164, both of Sharpstown. Politically, Mr. Dunham is a Republican.

A BONANZA & AN ENIGMA: ABOUT PAGE 5.

From a marvelous bunch of Dunham family memorabilia shared by Ann Eldred, Verona, NY, comes the photograph of an early Dunham reunion. Ann notes that she has no further information on this or other Dunham reunion pictures, but we're hoping some sharp-eyed reader can possibly pick out a familiar face among the group. This may well represent one of the long-held reunions of the Dunham clan centered in W. Monroe, NY. (Can we assume that most of these individuals are descendants of Calvin Dunham (1752/4-1840) (5) (Deacon John 1, Joseph 2, Nathaniel 3, Isaac 4)? We'd guess the date within a range of 1895-1905. As with many other family reunions, this assemblage seems to have arranged itself in a particular way: oldest members seated at the center of the group, next generation at the sides & directly behind their elders, young adults standing at the back, & the children seated on the grass in front -- which can't have done too much good for those light dresses that the girls are wearing. If someone could recognize just ONE of these people (perhaps from comparison with ANOTHER photograph), then it might follow that many more could be identified. So turn the page, & wear your eyes out in the service of family history. The DISPATCH will appreciate even the slightest of clues.

